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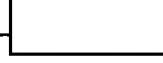
17 March 1955

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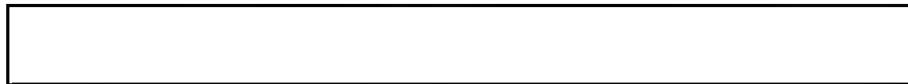


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Office of Current Intelligence

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DIA and DOS review(s) completed.

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SUMMARY

GENERAL

1. Soviet Foreign Ministry official states USSR would conclude Austrian treaty after Paris agreements ratified (page 3).

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SOUTHEAST ASIA

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4. Laotian action against Communists discouraged by British (page 5).

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GENERAL

1. Soviet Foreign Ministry official states USSR would conclude Austrian treaty after Paris agreements ratified:

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V. S. Semenov, who is in charge of Austrian and German affairs in the Soviet Foreign Ministry, told the Swedish minister in Moscow in early March that

the USSR would be prepared to conclude an Austrian treaty even if the Paris agreements were ratified. He stated further that the Soviet Union recognizes that the Austrian question is separate from that of Germany.

Comment: Semenov's statement is a departure from a long-established Soviet position that the Austrian question cannot be settled after ratification of the Paris accords and cannot be considered apart from the German problem because the rearmament of West Germany will intensify the danger of an Anschluss. Although Soviet propaganda continues to insist on a conference on Austria prior to ratification, Molotov did not mention this condition to the Austrian ambassador in their recent talks.

Moscow may believe that the Austrians must be assured of the continuing possibility of a peace treaty to prevent the integration of Austria into Western defense plans, and may have used this indirect means to accomplish this end. Austria sent a note to the USSR on 14 March seeking further clarification of Molotov's proposals.

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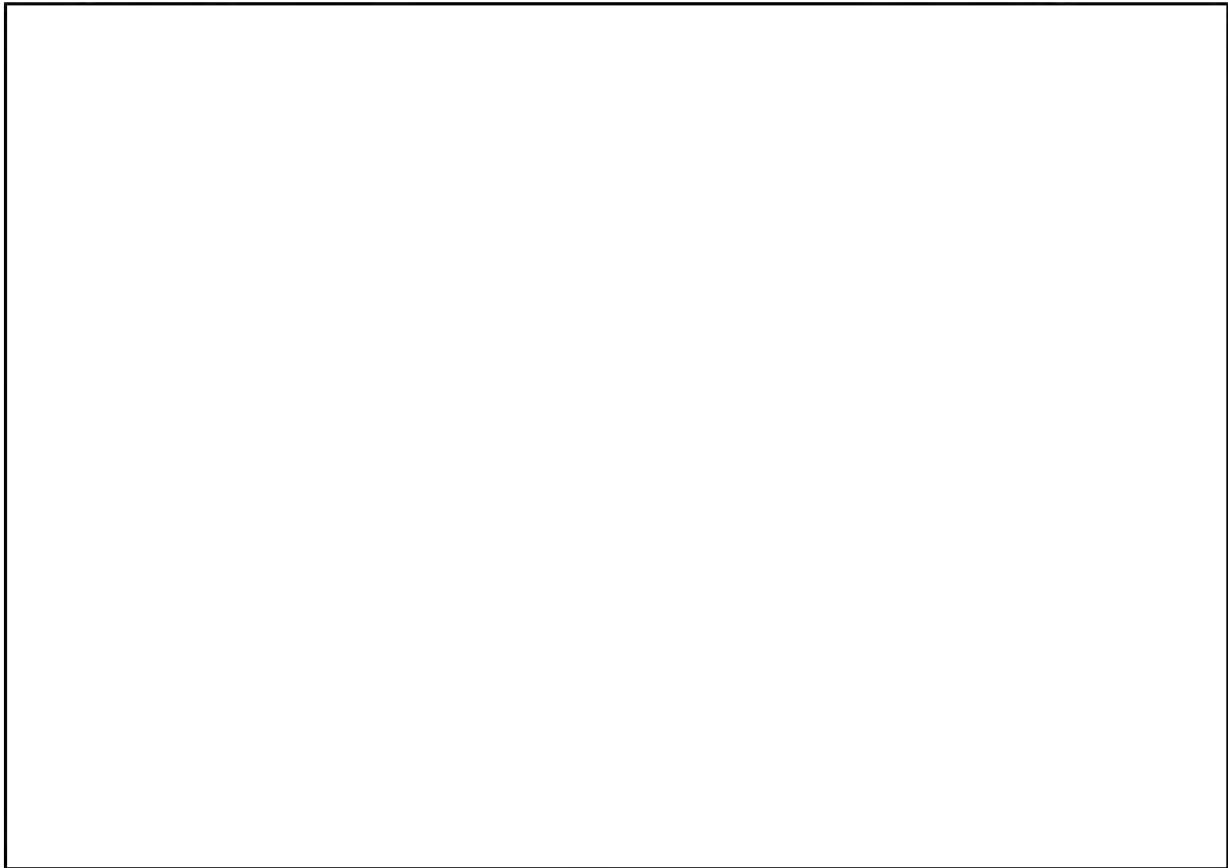
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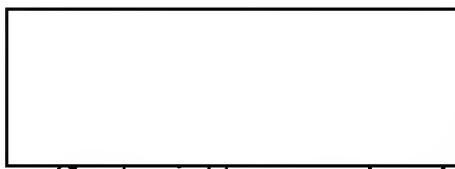
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4. Laotian action against Communists discouraged by British:

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British and French officials have been working to counteract American assurances to Laotian officials that, in view of the Manila pact, the Laotian government might proceed against the Communist-backed Pathet Lao without serious risk of overt external attack, the American minister in Vientiane reports.

British minister Talbot stated that he had been instructed to oppose the use of force by the Laotian government, in the belief that such action might provoke a Viet Minh invasion.

French representative Dufour, while not opposed "in principle" to the eventual use of force, doubts that the Laotians have the capability, without French military direction, to carry out such an operation.

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Comment: British and French overtures probably account for the Laotian government's agreement to a cease-fire with the Pathet Lao and its decision to continue talks in Vientiane. .

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The American army attaché in Vientiane believes royal forces have this capability, but only if the French direct the campaign and if the Pathet Lao is not reinforced by Viet Minh units.

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NEAR EAST - AFRICA

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